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THE CANADIANS AT YPRES
PAINTED BY H. B. WOLLEN. 1918

SEA DOGS AND MEN AT ARMS

THE CANADIAN BOOK OF SONGS

BY

EDGAR MIDDLETON

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TORONTO

W. H. GOODCHILD, & STEWART

NEW YORK AND LONDON

P. PUTNAM'S SONS

1918



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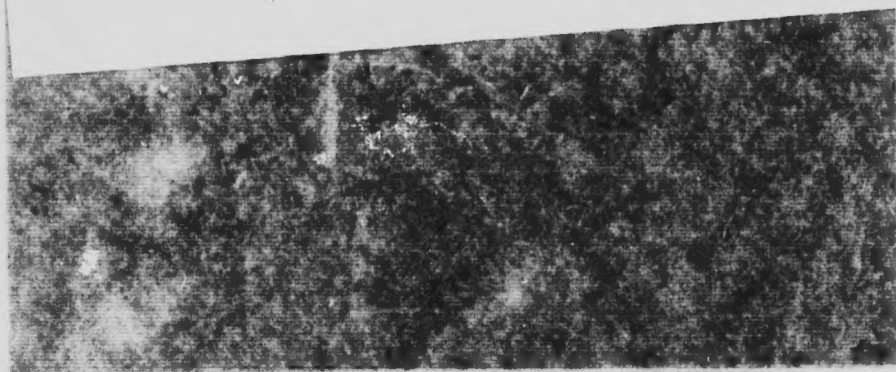
JESSE EDGAR MIDDLETON

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BY

JESSE EDGAR MIDDLETON

The Knickerbocker Press, New York

To
MY WIFE

Prefatory Note

MOST of the verses here collected first appeared in the *Toronto Daily News*, to which the author is indebted for permission to reprint. "The American Aviator," under the title of "The American Volunteer," appeared in the *All-Story Magazine*, of New York, and "Canada to America" in *Munsey's Magazine*. These are included by the courtesy of the publishers.



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SEA DOGS AND MEN AT ARMS

Sea Dogs and Men at Arms

THE CANADIAN

I NEVER saw the cliffs of snow,
The Channel billows tipped with cream
The restless, eddying tides that flow
About the Island of my dream.
I never saw the English downs
Upon an April day,
The quiet, old Cathedral towns,
The hedgerows white with may.

*And still the name of England
Which tyrants laugh to scorn
Can thrill my soul. It is to me
A very bugle-horn.*

A thousand leagues from Plymouth shore,
In broader lands I saw the light.
I never heard the cannon roar
Or saw a mark of England's might;

Save that my people lived in peace,
Bronzed in the harvest sun,
And thought that tyranny would cease,
That battle-days were done.

*And still the flag of England
Streamed on a friendly breeze,
And twice two hundred ships of war
Went surging through the seas.*

I heard Polonius declaim
About the new, the golden age,
When Force would be the mark of shame
And men would curb their murderous rage.
"Beat out your swords to pruning hooks,"
He shouted to the folk.
But I—I read my history books
And marvelled as he spoke.

*For it was glorious England,
The mother of the Free,
Who loosed that foolish tongue, but sent
Her Admirals to sea.*

And liberty and love were ours,
Home, and a brood of lusty sons,
The long, North sunlight and the flow'rs.
How could we think about the guns,

The Canadian

3

The searchlights on a wintry cloud,
The seamen, stern and bold,
Since we were hurrying with the crowd
To rake the hills for gold?

*But it was glorious England
Who scanned the threatening morn.
To me the very name of her
Is like a bugle-horn.*

CANADA TO AMERICA

AT Vimy Ridge your Flag was shown,
The starry Flag we love to praise.
By one bold Paladin 'twas borne.
Wreathe him the myrtle with the bays.

He wore our tunic gallantly,
Our flag was his, our bugle call.
And seeking after Liberty
He thought of Home, and yielded all.

God rest him! But Canadian guns
Had torn the enemy to wrack.
The bayonets of our Northern sons
Gleamed minatory in his track.

Your Flag was there. Your spirit spoke
Against this tyranny and wrong.
But we were in the battle-smoke
A hundred thousand strong.

According to the despatches, Private Robert Davis, of Texas, a member of one of the Canadian battalions which fought at Vimy Ridge, April 9, 1917, carried an American flag and waved it from the crest of the captured Ridge. He was killed in action shortly afterwards. This is said to be the first time that Old Glory was ever displayed on a European battlefield.

THE BALLAD OF JACK MONROE

OH, this is the tale of Jack Monroe,
With arm of iron and fist of brass,
Who fought a Champion long ago!
(The glittering years! How swift they
pass!)
And his back was broad and his eyes were
bright
And his soul was square and his spirit light.

He tramped far over the mossy rocks,
The rocks which bloom into cobalt rose,
Where the geese go past in their arrow flocks,
Where the spruce sings soft as the Norther
blows,
Where the Polar Torches illumine the sky
And the mystic lakes of the forest lie.

He came one day to the mining town
Across the lake in his bark canoe.
He filed his claims and they wrote them down
And plotted them all, and put them
through.

6 The Ballad of Jack Monroe

Then they spoke to him, by the veriest
chance,
Of the bloody war on the plains of France.

"A war?" he said, with a questing eye.
"Is England in it?" They answered,
"Yes."

Then Jack Monroe raised his head on high
And answered: "It's up to me, I guess.
I have a sister. She gets my coin.
Make out my will. I'm a-goin' to join."

And thus it was that old Jack Monroe
Brought deeds and papers, a goodly store,
To the claim Recorder the miners know
And saw them behind a good steel door,
And signed his will, and remarked: "So long!
I was always stuck on the bugle's song."

For he said: "It's Duty, and nothing less,"
And his lips were tight and his smile was
grim,
"So put me down for the Privates' Mess.
The King is calling, and I'm for him.
And what are the odds if I don't come
back?
They named me after the Union Jack."

The Ballad of Jack Monroe 7

And so he signed with the "Princess Pats."

You saw the beautiful regiment start
With the saucy swing and the rakish hats

And the love of a Girl in every heart.

And this is the story miners tell

Of a fighting-man who set out for Hell.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

GOD rest you, merry gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay.
The living Son of Mary stands
In the listening post today.
And if you fight for weaker folk,
For babes upon the breast,
Then have you fought full gallantly
And bayonets may be blest.

God save you, merry sailor folk,
A-roving on the seas,
With lightning in the turret guns,
With winter on the breeze.
Saint Peter was a sailor man.
The sons of Zebedee
Could haul a sheet or reeve a block
On boisterous Galilee.

God rest you, merry bombardier,
Beside the hidden gun.
There was a Roman officer
Who came to Mary's Son,

A Christmas Carol

9

And wore his blade more manfully
Beneath the Syrian skies,
Because the radiance of a Hope
Was ever in his eyes.

God save you, good Canadians,
Let nothing you dismay,
For He was brave and went to death
Calm as a summer's day,
Stronger than all the heathen gods,
(Let Thor and Wotan quake!)
Ay! look ye well at Mary's Son
Who died for Honour's sake.

MOODS

(Suggested by Debussy's Sonata for Violoncello and
Pianoforte)

THE FIRST MOVEMENT

UNFINISHED songs!
Pine boards, half-planed!
Bargain and sale,
Quarrel of rights and wrongs,
All ended like a tale.
Good-bye, good-bye
To dreary toils of peace!
Clear on the morning gale
Trumpets ring high,
Zouaves are in the Place,
And guns go by.
I, Jean Pierre
Of the Sixteenth Corps,
Must rise
And he'll-bent, haste there.

THE SERENATA

Yet, must I pause
To kiss my lady's lips.
Peril of earth and air,
Peril of ships
May reave my life,
Leave me to stare,
Unwinking at the petty five-franc moon,
And I would say farewell
Before it come to be.

Here is her slight guitar
Beribboned, out of tune.
I sweep the strings.
They only mar
My heart's insistent minor melody.
She greets me
With an outstretched hand
Coldly,
With a pale smile,
Then, turns to see
A passing band.
Chatters a while
Of everything but love
And Native Land,
Jests of the torn, white glove
Upon her hand.

And then,
As a lone bugle shrills
For me,
And I would go,
The tempest of her sudden grief
Bursts in a freshet flow.
Her arms imprison me.
She sobs aloud, "No, no!"

THE FINALE

Now with my comrades,
Rank on serried rank,
I march, with soldier laugh
And rough-hewn jest,
Past the fair daisy bank,
Then take my evening rest
In bosky shades,
While through the inky glades
The nightingale
Hymns his alluring note.
Above the bivouac
The moon sails high,
The cruel five-franc moon,
Glaring on such as I,
Doomed, doomed to die,
On the red sod to lie,

With fixed blue-purple stare
Away from love,
Away from care.

But as I dream,
Kissing a torn white glove,
Of that divinely passionate embrace,
Life is a sevenfold glory,
Death
(So Hope cajoles me)
But the hero of a fairy story.

H. M. DESTROYER *BROKE*

THEY called her *Broke*, and a splash of
wine

Foamed white as she left the smoking ways,
The lean Destroyer of airy line,
And they thought of the *Shannon's* guns
ablaze.

(And we Canadians know their tracks,
This *Broke*, and the noble crew he led,
As they jury-masted to Halifax,
With a splintered hull and the scuppers
red.)

They called her *Broke*, and perhaps they
prayed

That the memory of an ancient fight
Would shine upon gun and cutlass blade,
And give the sailors a double light.

And so it was, when a bloody foe
Swarmed all about in a rolling sea,
With only a crimson flash to show
The messengers of calamity.

H. M. Destroyer *Broke* 15

The spirit glimmered upon the "sight"
And limned in silver the foeman's craft.
Then out of the velvet, April night
The ghostly crew of the *Shannon* laughed.

A BALLAD OF WARRIORS

SOME acres of appalling land
Before our fellows lay.
A blade of grass could scarcely stand
On that tempestuous clay,
Shelled without stay.
The enemy had swept us out
But yesterday.

Grim were the powder-dusted cheeks,
Tears channelling the grime.
The labour of a dozen weeks
Lost, in one blast of time,
In one clock chime.
"We'll have it back," they fiercely cried
With faith sublime.

The corps commander smiled and said:
"The task is far too great.
Your shattered force, however led,—
I tremble for its fate.
If you will wait,
I'll send a regiment of Guards,
Fresh and elate."

"We lost it," said the Brigadier,
 "We'll take it back tonight.
Give us permission, and a cheer
 To help us in the fight.
 Thank you. Good-night.
And save the Guards for other tasks
 To suit their might."

Into the flares of Hell they ran,
 Determined, unafraid,
A hero-soul in every man.
 Dearly the foeman paid,
 Blade to red blade.
In death they cried, "We need no Guards
 In Our Brigade."

A SOLDIER'S SONG

I KNOW a stream in elfin land
Where lazy ripples curl,
Where the round pebble on the strand
Shines milky as a pearl.
And up, and up the elm trees look,
The topmost cloud their goal.
One sweeping branch above the brook
Cradles an oriole.

The thorns are summer drifts of snow,
The bees are plundering near.
Brave is the dandelion show,
The whirling swifts appear.
So velvet-green the meadow dress,
So heavenly blue the sky,
That in the pain of happiness
The dews bedim mine eye.

An earthy bank in violet guise
Illumes the lovely shade,
The colour of a sweetheart's eyes.
Would they might never fade.

A Soldier's Song

19

But violets will droop and die,
And sweethearts' eyes will close,
For even there, in eafin land,
The icy death-wind blows.

ARRIVED: H. M. S. *GOOD HOPE*

COLLINGWOOD on the Sea of Glass,
Rolling up to the Jasper Walls,
Came about on the starboard tack,
Stood by the mizzen halliard falls,
Broke a signal to Hawke and Hood,
Both hull-down on the shining sea;
This was the fluttering word he sent:
"Cradock is anchoring aft of me."

There, in his ship of battle-grey,
There, with his crew all smart and trim,
Under-bo'sns and warrantmen,
And the jollies saluting him.
Collingwood, from the *Sovereign's* deck,
Marked the ship on the golden swell,
Said to his flag-lieutenant, "Sir,
We are only a cockle-shell."

"Man the gig! I must go aboard.
Such a ship for the Sea of Glass!
Look, the ensign is floating still,
(But, it's oh for the sailor's lass!)"

Arrived: H. M. S. *Good Hope* 21

They are done with the westward Trades,
Done with the long Pacific swell,
Done with the gales of Hatteras.
England called, and they served her well."

Cradock stood on his shattered deck,
While the spirit in silken smalls
Mounted the ladder, took his hand,
There in sight of the Jasper Walls.
Collingwood, of the Sea of Glass,
Nelson, Jervis and gallant Blake,
Cheered the Admiral, Ship, and Crew
Dead and gone for Old England's sake.

OFF HELIGOLAND

GHOSTLY ships in a ghostly sea.
(Here's to Drake in the Spanish main!)
Hark to the turbines running free,
Oil-cups full and the orders plain.
Plunging into the misty night,
Surging into the rolling brine,
Never a word, and never a light—
This for England, that love of mine!

Look! A gleam on the starboard bow
(Here's to the fighting *Téméraire*!)
Quartermaster, be ready now,
Two points over, and keep her there.
Ghostly ships—let the foemen grieve.
Yon's the Admiral, tight and trim,
And one more—with an empty sleeve,
Standing a little aft of him!

Slender, young, in a coat of blue,
(Here's to the *Agamemnon*'s pride!)
Out of the mists that long he knew,
Out of the *Victory*, where he died,

Here, to the battle-front he came.
See, he smiles in his gallant way!
Ghostly ships in a ghostly game,
Roaring guns on a ghostly day!

There, in his white silk smalls he stands,
(Here's to Nelson, with three times three!)
Coming out of the misty lands
Far, far over the misty sea.
Now the Foe is a shattered wreck,
Speeding out of the deadly fight.
Smiling now, on the quarter-deck
Is the Spirit, all silver-bright.

THE VOYAGERS

GENTLEMEN Adventurers (like Fro-
bisher and Drake)

See the billow surging yet along the leeward
strake,

Batten down the for'ard hatch and shake the
tops'ls free;

Gentlemen Adventurers are still upon the
sea.

Gentlemen Adventurers (like Olav Tryg-
vason),

Mark an angry copper sky before the sunset
gun,

Make the craft all snug and tight ere yet the
blast they feel,

Call the quartermaster's mate and lash him
to the wheel.

Gentlemen Adventurers (like Hawkins, Bligh
and Cook)

Long ago the Channel buoys full cheerily
forsook.

Still they tack around the Horn, with
breakers on their lee,
While the hasty petrel skims the valleys of
the sea.

Gentlemen Adventurers (like Franklin and
his crew)

Bend before the Polar blast and struggle on
anew.

Gentlemen Adventurers! A toast to them
I call.

Soldierly they do their tasks, and soldierly
they fall.

OFF USHANT

A GREY sea and a lazy wave
That ripples upon the strand.
A rosy gull in the morning light
Which flames from the lofty land.
A ribbon weed in a rocky bay,
And this is rest, on a Summer day.

A blue sea and a snow-crowned wave
That dances in mad delight.
The flaring sun on a distant sail,
On the lighthouse tall and white.
A bubbling flood in the rocky bay,
And this is joy, on a Summer day.

A wild sea and a savage wave,
With the spindrift flying past.
An endless roar on the shingle strand
And the gulls a-feared at last.
The lighthouse dull in the ugly day
And foaming rage in the rocky bay.

Off Ushant

27

A dark sea and a glinting wave
In a blue and mystic light.
A murderous foe in a phantom ship
Unseen in the awful night.
And now, in the furtive dawn of day,
A shattered boat in the rocky bay.

THE ENGINEER

THE long, grey ships are running free
And loitering is done;
A drift of foam at every prow,
A crew at every gun.
And captains smile, and seamen shout,
But Lower Decks are grim,
For whatsoe'er may come, they know
The engines must be trim.

The Admiral can see the fleet
Come rolling into place.
The flag-lieutenant spells his code
With laughter on his face.
These are the men for whom the world
Upraises many a cheer.
But few of us take knowledge of
The grimy Engineer.

A shell may pierce the armoured deck
And tear his crank to scrap.
The cruel steam may come, and still
He stands within his trap,

The Engineer

29

Keen-eyed and stern as Rodney's self,
His mind serene and clear,
The battleship's intelligence,
The silent Engineer.

A thousand busy, clicking valves
Are here beneath his eye.
How every shaft is silver-bright!
How swift the pistons fly!
The dynamos are humming loud,
And every note sings clear
To him who dies without a fight,
The prisoned Engineer.

MISSING AT LLOYD'S

ARCH and gusset and sturdy truss
Riveted strong and true.
Plates as firm as the hoary rocks
Dipping beneath the blue.
Spinning turbine and shining shaft,
Piston and dynamo!
With a laugh at the snoring blast
Into the seas we go.

Swift and stern from the nor'-nor'-west
Riots the savage gale.
Never a sailor's eye is dimmed
Never a cheek is pale.
We are strong, and the bunkers full,
Winds of the world may blow.
Brave are the men on the for'ard bridge,
Bold are the men below.

Night, and a driving, hissing snow
Dulling the lamps a-port.
Night, and a million mocking waves,
Wild in their demon sport.

Spindrift whirling above the bridge,
Ice on the plates below.
We are strong, and the bunkers full.
Winds of the world may blow.

Phosphor's light on the raving sea
Giving us ghostly cheer!
Reeling, staggering, nor'-nor'-west
Into the gale we steer.
Arch and rivet and truss of the way,
Turbine and piston cease
Slanting decks and a rocket light!
Death—and the hills of peace.

CAPTAINS COURAGEOUS

NOW rest thee, Olav Trygvason,
In grim Valhalla's halls.
Now rest thee with the hero dead
Till Gabriel's trumpet calls.
Bold Viking of the yellow locks,
With dauntless eyes and true,
I mark thee in thy battleship
Surging across the blue.

Now rest thee well, Sir Patrick Spens,
Thy mariners and thee.
The King in old Dunfermline town
Has marked thy loyalty.
How fierce the blast, how stern the wave,
How wild the starless night.
But ocean could not dim thy fame
Or mock thee in the fight.

Sir Richard Grenville, rest thee well,
Old hero of the main.
One ship against the fifty-three
Which owned the flag of Spain.

Captains Courageous 33

Thy deeds are singing through the years,
Thy port was bold and free.
Now rest thee, till the Angel stands
Upon the shuddering sea.

And Drake and Nelson, rest ye well,
Companioned with the dead.
Bold paladins who took to sea
The fluttering cross of red,
Who trod the slanting quarter-deck
With spirits bold and high,
And in the light of duty done
Went smiling forth, to die.

THE *NEREID*, ITALIAN NAVAL SERVICE

THE *Nereid* fails us in the rise,
Burns out an armature.
We turn, with terror in our eyes
The deadly hurt to cure.
None but a fool would pray or weep,
Here in the greenish gloom,
For we are lying fathoms deep
All in a rounded tomb.

In sweat and weariness we toil,
With bolt, and bar, and wrench.
Time is the master of the toil
And whips us to the bench.
The wires are long, the winding slow,
And half the air is done.
We are the men who used to know
The Adriatic sun.

Three days and nights the hungry drills
Go plunging through the steel,
Three days and nights the hammer trills,
Three days the wires we reel.

The *Nereid*, Italian Naval Service 35

Antonio is stark and cold,
Blithe Giacomo raves,
And still we labour hard to mould
This paragon of graves.

The Captain, on the rim of death,
Has thrown the switch-bar home.
The dynamo's soft purring breath
Sings of the girls in Rome.
Then up, and up, through seas of dread,
Unconquered yet we rise,
Until a sunny world is spread
Before our hungry eyes.

ONLY THREE

WE read how the *Daffodil* shook
When the sneaking torpedo got home,
Of her list, and her pitiful look
In the whorl of a tempest of foam.

We read how the boats got away
As the *Daffodil* plunged to her rest,
In the freshening gale of the day
On the long billow's sickening crest.

We read of the cargo she bore,
And of what the good *Daffodil* cost,
And we read one cold sentence the more,
That only three persons were lost.

A trivial thing it appears
In a time of black murder at sea.
But tell me, O beautiful years,
The cost of it all—to the Three.

THE ROVER

CREAKING masts and the gale in sport.
Clouds, and a misty sun.
Petrels skimming away to port.
Reefs, and my watch begun.
Smartly now be the royals stowed!
Mary, Spring, and the Brighton Road!

Streaks of grey on the seaman's grave,
Never a star in sight.
Ghostly flares on the hissing wave,
Pale in the savage night.
One swift, billowy picture showed
Hawthorn bloom on the Brighton Road!

Parted sheets and the sails a-slat,
Breakers upon our lee.
Oh for land, were it only that
Under the gallows tree!
And I go to my long abode.
One last kiss to the Brighton Road!

A WARDROOM SONG

THE savage winds of winter blow
And raise the billows high.
Along the valleys darkly green
The Mother Careys fly.
But, though the spray is in our eyes,
The salt spume on our lips,
And though the *Bully Ruffian* rolls
Until the taffrail dips
Who cares? Who cares? The gales are Free
And 'tis an honest British sea!

THE NEW BIRTH

THE Saucy *Arethusa* dies,
Her grave, the tumbling sea.
Her spirit is in port again
And waits for what must be,
Another armour, stronger yet,
Another battery!

TRAFALGAR, OCT. 21, 1805

SOU'-sou'-west is the failing breeze
Loitering here with the lazy seas.
Stuns'ls, royals, are weather grey,
But they can give us steering way.
Load, my lads, ere the wind be gone,
For the Frenchman, the courtly Don.
Double-shot for a double foe!
Think of the girls on Plymouth Hoe!

Back and forth in the Middle Sea,
Egypt, Naples and Sicily,
Fifty times we stood off and on.
(There was a bullet to chew upon!)
But to miss it, the shifty fleet
Passing The Rock with hasty feet
Off to the Indies, tack by tack.
But we followed and chased them back.

See to your priming. Keep it dry.
Forty-six of 'em yonder lie.
Curse the breeze! It is almost done.
Whistle now, every mother's son.

See the Admiral's happy smile.
Cheer, ye lubbers! Another mile,
Then to pay for the months of chase,
Pay on the nail, with grape and case.

Hold your ranks. Not a single change!
Down! The enemy has the range.
Steady, lads, though the blocks may fall,
Nelson sees you and loves you all.
Hardy laughs while the splinters fly.
Not a gun, till we're wearing by.
Stand. God bless ye, the time is near.
Hard-a-starboard! Now, damme, *cheer!*

See the plight of the *Téméraire*,
Never a sail to catch the air!
Fighting still with a shattered crew,
Gunnery smoke wreaths on the blue.
Look at the *Vanguard*, missing stays!
Look at the *Victory's* broadside blaze.
Double-shot for a double foe.
That for England, and Plymouth Hoe!

.
Sou'-sou'-west is the freshening gale.
But the Admiral, cold and pale,
Lies a corse in his weary ship.
Still the enemy's colours dip,

42 Trafalgar, Oct. 21, 1805

Still the boarders go leaping by,
Pistol ready and cutlass high.
Victory! But we see afar
Old Saint Paul's and a funeral car.

THEN AND NOW

A SONG OF ADVENTURE LUST

THERE on the surly gallows tree
 Upraised upon a dreadful hill,
The blackened highwayman we see
Who rode abroad with pistols three
 The baronet to kill.

Bold robbers lurked in frightful lanes,
 And swords outleaped in every street,
For in the cities and the plains
Security was hedged with pains,
 And traps allured the feet.

So, dazzled with the flare of life,
 Men heard the monastery bell.
From rapier point, from robber's knife,
From roar of trumpet, drum and fife,
 They sought the quiet cell.

But we had made the busy world
 An Abbey, safe for man or maid.

From joy to joy we gaily whirled,
And even battle-flags were furled,
And rusty was the blade.

The thrust *en quart* no gentle knew
We laughed at Benvenuto's skill.
Safety was common as the dew,
Or as the mounting summer blue
Above a northern hill

So when the bugle's brazen notes
Sounded the call to bloody fight,
A sudden cheer was in our throats.
Our one Adventure—casting votes—
Was trivial and light.

We sought the plains of Picardie
As Brother Bernard sought the cell,
Weary of our security
And if we fall, that men be free,
God rest us. All is well.

UNDER THE BLACK EAGLE

EYES looked to hazel eyes,
Soul spake to soul.
Love was her high emprise,
Love was her goal.
Love was her light and noon,
Under the black eagle

There came the raging foe
With desire.
A red tide to flow!
A pine and fire
Over love's garden plot,
Over the lovers' cot.

She who was still a bride
Gallantly stayed,
Keeping her Belgian pride,
Lent her sweet aid,
Giving the wounded cheer,
Hiding a world of fear.

Still rose the fiery wave,
Scarlet and black.
Louvain was but a grave,
Namur a wrack.

46 Under the Black Eagle

Then was her husband found
Prisoned and basely bound.

Slowly the gentle bride,
Hope is so brief,
Faded. Alas, and died,
Crushed by her grief.
Still her adorer stands
Helpless in alien lands.

Eyes look to sightless eyes,
Soul speaks to soul.
Still, though a woman dies,
Love is her goal.
Over her grave, the snows.
And the red tide still flows!

The Honourable Dr. Henri Sévérin Béland, M.P. for Beauce, and formerly Postmaster-General of Canada was married in 1913 to a Belgian lady of high rank. When war was declared, Dr. and Mme. Béland were living in a château not far from Liège. They gave up their home to the wounded, serving them as surgeon and nurse, respectively, and remained until after the place was captured by the Germans. For a time the invaders respected their status as non-combatant Red Cross workers, but discovering Dr. Béland's Canadian citizenship and standing, they took him prisoner and removed him to Germany, compelling his wife to remain in Belgium under supervision. Early in 1917, worn out by toil and anxiety, Mme. Béland died.

A SONG OF ROMANCE

MEN of Crécy plied the bow
Fashioned from the springing yew.
Fiercely fled the humming shaft
Black against the Norman blue.
English archery is done.
Hauberks are a heap of rust.
Bows are broke, and arrows flown,
Men of Crécy, ye are dust.
Still to us in newer lands
'Mid the stars our England stands

Winds that sweep the English downs
Kiss the churchyard elms, and sigh
O'er the venerable elder graves
Where the men of Crécy lie.
Then on Windsor's turret-top
Spread the banner, rich and fair.
Sister winds of British breed
Spread it in our Northern air,
For to us in newer lands
'Mid the stars our England stands.

Hoary billows of the main,
Once the fighting *Téméraire*
Bowled a-past the Pyrenees,
Royals set and drawing fair.
All your rage she heeded not,
O'er the hissing waves she ran.
Bold and high, the sailor-cheer
When the starboard guns began.
Nelson, Jervis, Collingwood,
'Mid the stars their England stood.

Look, ye billows! Prows of steel,
Thunder giants cold and grim,
Rushing on, fleet-footed ghosts,
To the far horizon's rim!
Lightning sleeping in the hold,
Empires in the forward gun,
And Saint George's Cross of red
Gleaming in the morning sun.
Seas, rejoice and clap your hands,
'Mid the stars your England stands.

Not the spring of English yew,
Not the smoke of screaming shell,
Armoured deck or conning tower,
Not in these our hopes may dwell.

A Song of Romance

49

What are turret-crowns of might
Driving, plunging through the seas?
Less than nought, if Freedom fail,
Sacrificed to sodden ease.
Break the soft and silken bands!
'Mid the stars our England stands.

Liberty, the shining maid,
Knows the scent of Surrey thorn,
Knows the mellow Austral air,
Knows the purple Afric morn.
'Neath the palms she takes her way,
'Neath the pines on tor and fell.
In the storied East she walks,
Hears the jingling camel-bell.
Wreath the bay with loving hands.
'Mid the stars our England stands.

4

KING EDWARD THE SEVENTH

(Died, May 6, 1910)

L ONELY upon the hill, a regal pine
Mourns to the passing gale,
And the white birches wreathed in columbine
Tell to the stars the tale.
The orange trees are bending to the ground,
The palm is drooping low,
And minute guns in sullen anguish sound
Where'er the Flag may go.

The sea, that sevenfold mystery of blue,
Tosses its locks of white,
Scatters abroad its tears, a briny dew
Of diamonds in the light;
Sobs to the galleons upon the wave
Trailing the Cross of red,
"Our Master leaves us for the solemn grave.
Our Lord, the King, is dead."

The Norfolk thorn is white with odorous
may,
The larks their anthem sing.

King Edward the Seventh 51

The temple gongs of Jaipur and Bombay
In sweet discordance ring.
Canadian lilies of the woodland dells
Drink in the springtime rains.
Flocks graze behind the silver wether bells
On the Australian plains.

And here, and everywhere, the Flag droops low
Mournful from every mast.
Upon the holy Ganges, broad and slow,
The shade of it is cast,
While from the organs of a thousand fanes
Rumbling in vaulted arch
The world has caught the sad, but kingly
strain
Of Requiem and March.

He that was King is dust, and Time rolls on
Bringing the roar of strife.
The Empire stands, and in the light that
shone
From Royal Edward's life,
We scan—though dimly yet—the Thousand
Years,
The wonder-time of Peace
When men will put away their petty fears
And the mad drums may cease.

PEACE AND WAR

A PLEASANT river, clear and blue,
Went singing to the sea.
The sunbeams joined them hand in hand
To dance the melody.
The courtly rushes bowed their heads
As nobles to the Queen,
And saw, reflected in the wave,
Their coats of Lincoln green.

Into this crystal flood of loveliness
Were poured the scourings of a filthy town,
The bloody entrails of unnumbered swine,
Foul carrion, infinity of dung,
Food, gone to rottenness unspeakable.
And on the surface of the thickening stream
Dead dogs, all stewing in the summer sun,
Made an obscene and measured pilgrimage.

But Fools who paced the noisome bank
Declared: "It must be so.
God made the sewers of the world
And regulates their flow,

That we, His sons, might steel our souls
 To arduous endeavour
 And walk unfrighted in the stench
 Forever and forever."

God made such horrors? Count that word a
 lie.

God made the pleasant river, clear and blue.
 Peace is His handiwork, and love, and joy,
 While man makes sewers—and artillery,
 Grim bayonets and howitzers and shell,
 The battle-squadron surging through the
 tides,

Ten thousand hecatombs of reeking red
 And all the vile magnificence of War.

THE BROTHERHOOD

YOUR British Isles, my Shakespeare?

Yea, but not yours alone!
Far bugles singing softly clear,
Where June is winter, meet mine ear,
And where the Maytime tempests moan.

Your British Isles, my Milton sweet?

Yea, but not yours alone!
The drum's insistent roaring beat
In every broad Canadian street
Has pride and fervour in its tone.

Your Chelsea, O my brave Carlyle?

Yea, but not yours alone!
In every soft Pacific isle,
In every Indian temple-pile,
The bold St. George is loved and known.

Your Holyrood, my Waverley?

Yea, but not yours alone!
For every mermaid in the sea
Sings of the ensign, ruffling free,
In soft and tender monotone.

The Brotherhood

55

Your sons are 'neath the Flemish sod.

Yea, but not yours alone!

Brothers are we, beneath the rod,

Brothers we fight before our God,

Brothers beneath the churchyard stone.

ET NUNC, REGES, INTELLIGITE

IN morions and helms of brass
The men of psalmody and might
Had slain a King who sought to pass
Between Old England and her right,
Taking, while angry war-drums roared,
The surly vengeance of the sword.

They struck a medal in their pride.
Around the rim a motto ran.
Since only Justice may abide,
Since Freedom is the hope of man,
Since Tyranny, in curls, was dead,
"And now, ye Kings, be wise!" it read.

Another King stood forth to die,
And other drums roared loud and deep,
For purple Royalty was high,
And France was mad and life was cheap.
Pale courtiers saw with shuddering dread,
September sabres dripping red.

Once more the world is torn with hate
For Majesty has played the fool.

Et Nunc, Reges, Intelligite 57

He fouls his honour to be great,
And carrion poisons every pool.
Now bayonets gleam on every plain.
Be wise, ye Kings, your crowns are vain.

THE MOTHER

HE freely gave his life, they say,
Life, sweeter than a dewy field,
Fresh as a cloudless April day.
But was it only his to yield?

Once it was mine, and only mine.
I trembled with a thousand fears,
Tasting the wormwood in the wine,
Singing *Magnificat* with tears.

Once it was mine, that sacred spark,
Scarce could I leave his cot to rest.
How I remember, in the dark,
Those baby fingers on my breast!

He marched with gladness to the fray.
He met the foe. His head was high.
But, since that hard, relentless day,
His flesh and mine in Flanders lie.

GARRULOUS CRITICS

"THEY buried him darkly at dead of night,
The sods with their bayonets turning."
And the hearts of those who had lost the fight
With anger and grief were burning.
They had done their best when the guns
engaged,
That pitiful corps in red,
But the wisest officer wept and raged
When he heard what London said.

The ships, with the trimmings scattered free,
Tacked out from the coast of Spain,
And searched to the Caribbean Sea
Then scouted back again.
"Gad, gentlemen, but the hunt goes wide!"
Said the one-armed thoroughbred.
But the joy of his soul had almost died
When he learned what London said.

Our men are proved. They have played the
game
As it never was played before,

From Haig to Corporal What's-His-Name

They have fought, and called for more.

The soldiers, camped in a slimy land,

And the sailors, Viking-bred,

Pinned down the foe with relentless hand

But wept at what London said.

THE ZEPPELIN

THE sacristy was trimmed with orange
bloom.

The memory of incense floated faint
About the altar. In the holy gloom
A lamp was hung before a placid saint,
A red lamp, burning everlastingly.

The priestly monotone, the bride's reply,
Soft with the sweet timidity of love!
The bridegroom's light caress, the answering
sigh!

A golden circlet and a crumpled glove.
Thus, thus they launched them on a misty sea.

The evening firelight glanced upon their eyes.
They sat, divining, by the yellow flame,
Seeing long years of joy; a richer prize,
Fair children to perpetuate a name
To the far limits of Eternity.

One sudden blaze of Hell, one roaring blast!
The devil laughter of a coward foe!
Then dreams and love and life itself are past.
What fool can say that God would have
it so,
Our God, who made the flowers and the sea?

LORD KITCHENER

MEN say he died, and tears of anger burn
The leathern cheek of soldier and
marine.

Men say he died. Into St. Paul's they turn,
Workman and Baron, parlour-maid and
Queen,

And waves of prayer and billows of sweet
sound

Rise to the topmost circle of the dome.
And yet no urn, no grassy churchyard mound,
May mark the hero's everlasting home.

Men say he died, but Marlborough is alive.

The lads of Pontenoy are marching yet.

The Minden regiments are wont to strive.

In Torres Vedras Wellington is set.

They live, these heroes, and they never tire

Of whispering in the youngling Private's

ear

Telling him tales of pride and British fire

Till countless wonders in his deeds appear.

Deep in the ocean's blue infinity

That soldier body has been doomed to lie.

In English caverns of the English sea

Ten thousand sons of Admiralty cry:

"No more we come with cutlasses in hand

To teach the foe what red revenge may be,

But we, and Kitchener, can understand

The luxury of dying to be free."

THE PARTING

HER cavalier in boots and spurs
By the Niagara stream,
Drank of the stirrup cup and said:
"This, dearest, is my dream,
That you may be a bride to me
Within our cottage walls.
One last embrace, O soul of mine,
The cruel trumpet calls."

The maiden's lips were deathly white.
She would not bid him stay.
She smiled upon her cavalier
Whom Honour called away.
And though the dread of battle gripped
That loyal, tender heart,
She bore her proud and soldierly,
Since he must needs depart.

O cavalier, in boots and spurs,
The Flemish fields are red,
And many a belted subaltern
The same Good-Bye has said.

The Parting

But if you ride afar to death
—So you be true and brave—
The memory of an endless love
Is deeper than the grave.

DISMOUNTED

OUR cavalry spurs are red with rust
And our bridle arm is stale,
We can but dream of the cut and thrust,
Of the flying charge or the sabre lust,
And never a cavalry trumpet-gust
Goes shrilling upon the gale.

But the Light Hussars when the night is
grey

Will be over the bloody bank,
For the bayonet is the tool today
(And a dozen bombs on a little tray),
And we tramp as infantry through the clay
With the Fifteenth on our flank.

But the eyes of the marching Light Hussar
Will shine in the roaring fray,
And many a maiden near and far
Will sigh for the yellow stripe and bar,
They know what the jingling troopers are
And what beautiful things they say.

IN THE CRUCIBLE

THE world was filthy in its Maker's eyes.
Sink-holes of tyranny and wells of greed,
Mountains of self and pyramids of lies,
With robber barons camped on every mead!
The world was filthy, 'neath a heavenly sun.
Rivers of hate and stinking pools of pride!
But now the day of cleansing has begun.
The fiery blast of war is sweeping wide.

False cleverness and reeking forms of Art
The springs of love and reverence defiled.
God was an empty name, and on the mart
A crew of swindlers other thieves beguiled.
And there were slums, unutterably foul,
And maids were bought to feed the fauns'
desire,
And Kings sowed dragons' teeth. Now
cannon growl
And full-armed men have filled the world
with fire.

Then hail, red War! A welcome, bloody
strife,

If in the flame our sins be burned away,
If we may find a wiser, cleaner life,

Wholesome and brotherly in this our day.
If bonds hold true, if Freedom may arise,

Her snow-white banner gallantly unfurled.

Then welcome, War, and all its fierce emprise,
The cleansing flame, so it refine the world.

A SONG OF THE FLAG

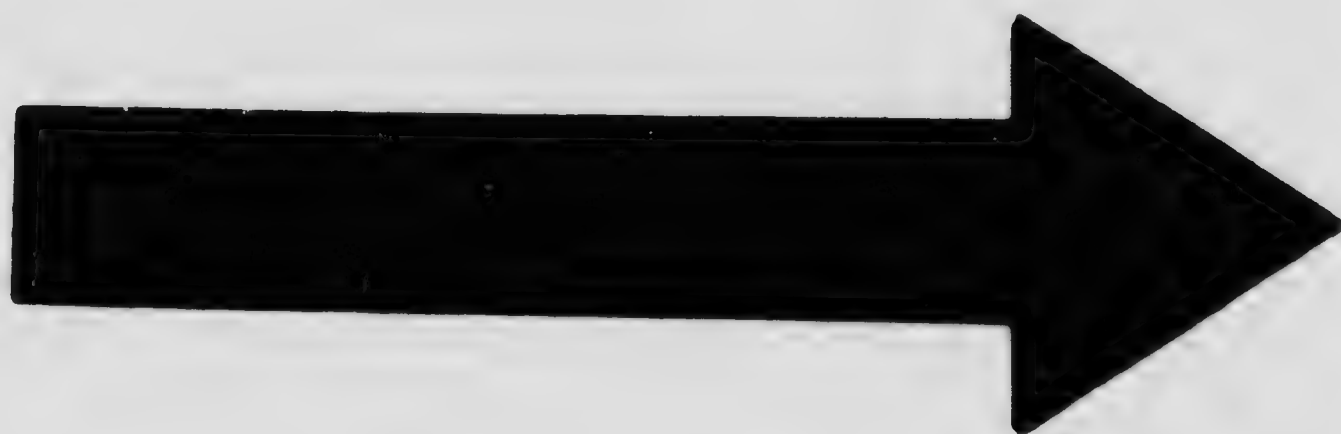
UNFURL the noble Union Jack,
Fling it upon the breeze,
The Flag of every watery track
In seven briny seas!
It knows, and loves, and understands
The gales of Singapore,
The breath of half a hundred lands
From Dawson to Lahore.

Unfurl the noble Union Jack!
Oft in the ancient night
It waved above the hideous wrack
Of many a raging fight,
When tyrants left the world appalled,
When Freedom was unknown,
That fair device of heroes called
As with a clarion tone.

Unfurl the Flag of our delight,
St. George's cross of red,
St. Andrew's and St. Patrick's white,
The treasure of our Dead!

A Song of the Flag 71

In half a hundred weary lands
Their bones forever lie,
But every soldier spirit stands
To see the Flag go by.



(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)



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FOR DOMINION DAY

NOT for the lakes of glancing blue
I love this land of mine,
Not for the dark Laurentian streams
Be-rimmed with spruce and pine,
Not for the blushing winter peaks
Where snows forever shine!

Rich are the fields; but not for gold
Of wheat or dazzling ore,
And not for silver fisheries
My land would I adore.
(Could I forget my lady's kiss
To count her worldly store?)

Nay. Were my land a wilderness,
Still here would I abide.
It is the soul of Canada
That lifts my head in pride.
Mother of half-a-million men
Who Tyranny defied.

BILLY

NO cheek so fair, no eye so bright,
But they are veiled in misty night.
No tongue so brave, no lyric throat,
But Death stills every ringing note.

Alas, my friend! He fell too soon
Beneath the ghastly Flemish moon,
But praised be God, he is not dead
Upon the coward's ivory bed!

For what he might have been, I weep,
Deep calling unto soundless deep.
For what he was, ere yet he died,
My soul may sweep the stars with pride.

THE QUESTION

WHAT can I do for thee, Flag of my soul?
Fight upon land or sea, while the
drums roll,
While the shrill bugle-call flames in the air,
Willing to stand or fall willing to dare!

What can I do for thee, Banner of mine?
They have rejected me. Youth makes the
line.

Others may serve the guns. Here I remain
While my heroic sons redden the plain!

What can I do for thee, Flag I adore?
This. I can strive to be worthy the more,
Giving the share that a patriot must,
Breathing a prayer for the men who are dust!

THE AMERICAN AVIATOR

FULL brother to the Matterhorn
I ride the upper airs.
I see on each celestial morn
The blush the cloud-bank wears.
I pass the vulture and the kite
Above the battle hung,
And little shrapnel puffs of white
Across my course are flung.

But yesterday I rowed for Yale.
They said my life was marred.
(Loud is the laughter of the gale!)
In Physics I was "starred."
Perhaps they think of me this morn
One rummy of the crew,
Full brother to the Matterhorn,
A sword-point in the blue.

THE OLD-TIME COLOUR

DOES any one think of "the thin, red line"
In these days of muddy brown?
Have we quite forgotten the tunic fine
That shone in the dullest town?
It has blazed all over a quarrelsome earth,
It never was far to seek,
The red, red coat with the pipe-clay girth
From Plassey to old Fish Creek.

But though the scarlet should disappear
And never again come back,
There's enough of the blessed hue to cheer
In the fluttering Union Jack.
It speaks of a thousand years of fight,
With never a time to rest,
Of a million men gone into the Night
For the *Islar-ís* of the Blest.

OF WALKING SOLDIERLY

SHOULD I depart, O lady mine,
To give my body to the King,
Leaving my cup of heavenly wine,
Those eyes, and hope's imagining,
Hold high and proud thy stately head
And veil thy glorious grief a while,
Restrain the swelling tides of dread,
Give me the tribute of a smile.

And I shall understand, my dear,
And keep thee closer in my heart,
Though not a tremor, not a tear
Betray thine anguish as we part.
We are Canadians, lady mine,
With heroism in our veins.
Our noble brothers of the Line
Go singing on the Flemish plains.

THE FRUITAGE

HERE in a festering heap of earth
A bulbous treasure lies.
"Dead!" say the fools in high disdain,
"Dead!" cry the worldly-wise.
But April, through her sunny tears,
Will see the lily rise.

Dead, on a putrid Flemish plain,
And mangled by a shell.
"The end, the end!" say fools and blind.
Not so! For all is well,
And Liberty will blossom like
The lily of the dell.

THE CHILDREN

THERE is no music of the viol, of mellow
horn, or limpid flute,
No tone of organ, billowy harp, or softly
serenading lute
So sweet, so grateful and so mild
As the free laughter of a child.

Our savage enemies, in grim obedience to a
Vandal's nod,
Would rise and slay the cherubim hard by the
Paradise of God.

How could they spare in their red heat
The laughing children on the street?

IRONY

OUT of the hills' eternal store
We brought the gift of God,
The orange drifts of iron ore
Long hid beneath the sod.
From rocks as old as Night and Hell
Green-crustcd copper came.
We forged the gun, the mine, the shell,
And praised the Maker's name!

THE REJECTED

IN the blaze of the battle line
Regiments have been slain for me.
Whole ships' companies, friends of mine,
Drift and drown in the hungry sea.
Here am I in a golden land,
Living in comfort, clothed and shod.
Am I worthy? In shame I stand
Naked, empty, before my God.

A SONNET OF PURPLE

NOW Beauty's arm displays a purple zone.
What King lies regal on a star-lit bier?
What Prince has heard the elf-horn whispering near,
That strange, mysterious and awful tone?
For Purple speaks of royalty alone,
The soft insignia of a queenly tear,
A grim, dark palace, infinitely drear,
A whimpering spaniel, by an empty throne.

It was a King. His torn and spattered clay
Still shudders at the cannon's thunderous
art.

His crown, a wreath of myrtle and of bay.
And thus ten thousand thousand Kings
depart.

He ruled benign, with undisputed sway,
His Presence Room,—a maiden's noble
heart.

LANGEMARCK

OUR soldiers face infernal arts
In desolated lands,
A song of Freedom in their hearts,
Our honour in their hands.

God save them, bred of noble sires!
The proud and lustful foe
Has heard the rolling thunder-fires
Of their Eternal No!

FLAG DAY

HERE in my Belgian flag
The gold may stand for shining deeds
Without the taint of brag.

The crimson tincture there
May speak the blood of noble breeds,
The scars they proudly wear.

The black—that shadow land
Where men receive their well won meeds
And heroes understand.

TO CANADA

WE did not know our Canada,
Her spirit and her pride,
Her passion for the triple cross
That floated far and wide.
Forgive us all, dear native land,
Now, while the war drums roll.
We thought that craven money-lust
Had shrivelled up your soul.

LIFE

"IF I were young" said Aunt Mary,
With a glance at the boy, and a long, long
sigh
And a touch of dew in her gentle eye.

"If I were old" said the boy
With a whimper over his porridge dish,
And his little body one quivering wish.

"If he were old?" said Aunt Mary,
With a shuddering thought of the battle plain
And her spirit gripped by a sudden pain.

"If I were old!" said the boy,
Soon as the porridge dish was done,
Marching away with his wooden gun!

TO THE ABSENT

THE music thrills to my very bone,
The deep bass green of a billowy sea,
The willow tints of the tenor tone,
The song of women, like spray, to me,
Snow-pure, from the wave-crest flying free.

And the rhythmic sweep of the choral hymn
Sounds like the beautiful winter waves
That beat on the ocean's sandy rim
And sing in a hundred rocky caves
Their requiem over Admirals' graves.

In every burst of the blessed song
I dream of an airman falcon-high,
And of infantry lads—for the list is long—
Who left their music with never a sigh
And marched like heroes, ready to die.

(Forty-seven former members of the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir are on active service. One is in the Royal Flying Corps)

Do they hear in the deep-wrought shivering
clay,

Or in the spume of a sullen cloud,
The songs they knew when the world was gay,
The bursts of harmony, rich and loud,
Do they see the beautiful, eager crowd?

Libera Me, the airman sings,
And his eyes are brimmed with a soldier
dew,

The shrapnel whines in his far-spread wings
As he circles wide in the wintry blue.

Libera Me, and his tones are true.

In die illa tremenda sounds

From a surly billet in Picardie,
From a midnight guard on his weary rounds,
From a cruiser staggering through the sea.
And the twoscore gentlemen fight for me!

THE MINER

ALL through the mine, deep, darksome and
unkind,

I feel the throbbing beat of enginery,
Adown black corridors an outdoor wind
Brings dreams of open sky and foaming sea.
So, gladsome in the thought of field and wood,
I look upon my toil and find it good.

My candle glimmers bravely in the gloom.
Reverberant and fearful every sound,
And shadow-forms, like ghosts from out a
tomb,

Rise menacing, or dart along the ground.
But while I taste this air, while engines beat,
My heart is singing, and my life is sweet.

Not here my home, a thousand fathoms deep,
Where witches mow, and gibbering devils
dance,

Where Vulcan forges, 'neath the craggy steep,
His rumbling thunders and his fiery lance.
Not here;—unless the engines labour well
The air were heavy with the breath of Hell.

Nay, nay! I dream of other sights than these.

The generous upland, yellow with the corn,

The graceful birches bowing to the breeze,

The rose and amber of a smiling morn,

Rock-whited streams, the warm, rich-tinted

noon,

The steely starlight, and the crescent moon.

God's world is this, God's rhythmic engines
beat.

God's air is breathing in the mine of life.

It bears the scent of roses, faintly sweet,

And shadows fear, and devils cease their
strife.

And we are labouring boldly in the night

Knowing there must be hills and seas and
light.

THE PENALTY

A LITTLE maid whose lisping tongue
First cheered us while the War was
young
Heard in the rapture of her play
Of Death, two thousand leagues away.

We praised one who with massy blows
Smote hip and thigh a thousand foes,
And spoke of him, in grievous pain,
Now numbered as a hero slain.

She trilled her song, with bending head,
Putting her pretty doll to bed.
We hoped she ne'er would understand
The angry gun, the flaming brand.

.

Then died in peace an elder friend.
Calm he had waited for the end.
We stroked the little maiden's head,
Told that her best-beloved was dead.

"Who killed him?" was the swift reply,
A blaze of anger in her eye.
Thus, while our sinless children grow
Our violence is all they know.

SAMOA AND R.L.S.

WHAT if the bones of Stevenson
 (As in the sight of an ancient Seer)
Gathered themselves, and soon had won
 Flesh and muscle, and tailors' gear!
What if Stevenson, thus arisen,
 Out of the glooms of death came back,
Finding Samoa his German prison
 Rapturous under the Union Jack!

Wouldn't he hold his honest head
 High and proud in the golden days?
Wouldn't he love the man who said,
 "Here is the Flag and here it stays!"
Wouldn't he write a wonderful tale
 Celebrating the sudden fight
After the Anzacs' headlong sail?
 Stevenson—who is dead to-night.

RACHMANINOFF

A MOUNTAIN crag uplifted to the sky,
Rising above the murk and mist of
earth,
Hearing the music, as the stars go by,
Seeing the sunbeams at the morning's birth,
Yet, in itself, unlovely, save, perchance,
In simple mightiness and rugged line,
Unshaken by the lightning's gleaming lance
Or by the thunders rolling through the
pine.

Yet in the crag, a grotto fair and white
Where springs a crystal fountain, cold and
clear.

A dancing rill which takes its rapid flight,
Down, down the rocks and precipices sheer,
And broadens to a river bright and blue
Which flows across the plain, far, far, and
free

Bringing divine content to us and you
Till it is lost in one eternal sea.

.

A man, unlovely, but of iron face,
The lines of toil and battle on his cheek.
His glance severe. The sorrow of a race
Written upon his brow. His manner, meek
And youthful, but a drift of iron grey
Touches his sable hair with sombre light.
A gladiator, ready for the fray,
A strong, true man, of majesty and might.

He sits, and from the instrument he brings
A limpid rill of music, sunny bright.
We hear the melody that Nature sings.
We see the stars upon a wintry night.
We dream of love, its magic and its pain,
Its ecstasies, its deep, resistless tide
Sweeping through life to the eternal main.
The very gates of Heaven are opened
wide.

THE DEMAGOGUE

ONE blows the spark and laughs to see
His power to compel the flame.
"Behold the influence of Me!"
He boasts, "The magic of My name!"
Then, as the spark is counted tame,
Roars the red giant, fury-free.

One blows the spark, his private flame,
His pleasure, glistening and fine.
Now, when he cometh to his shame,
War lifting high the baleful wine
Toasting red death to me and mine,
Mark you that thrice-accursèd name!

CONTENT

COULD I, with a thousand friends, or
more,
And a thousand tuneful songs in the air,
Walk discontented on earth's bright floor,
And ask more peace than my present store
Which is excellently rare?

I hold with an ancient Prince who said
That wealth and poverty both were ills.
I shall never be rich, since my sons have bled,
And I can't be poor. Though the boys be
dead
They walk on the silver hills.

LAKE LOUISE

RED was the log. The lights burned fair
On ageing oak and rosy stair.
The viol sang of Nedda's pain,
And sobbed and laughed and wept again.

A marvellous maid in apple green
Came whispering to the window screen
That there were wider, braver stores
Of beauty in God's out-of-doors.

I looked, and the mysterious guest
Wore winking stars upon her breast.

THE ETERNAL WHY

(To the memory of Mr. S. T. Wood)

OUT of a red and clangorous world
My friend departed
When passions were caught up and whirled
Into a mad typhoon of death,
Full willingly he spent his breath,
Sorry and weary-hearted.

For he had hoped that war was done,
That men were tender.
How he abhorred the burly gun!
Dreaming that soft persuasion's art
Might change our world's dull, greedy
heart,
Be her defender.

Yet he had found in Nature's world
Inclement hating.
The pupa, where a leaf was curled
By wingèd foes was fiercely sought.
And e'en the singing victors fought
When they were mating.

If man were Heavenly, if his hope
Were on foundations,
Whether by candle, alb and cope
Or by the Self, in bond with God;
Then why the horsemen, iron-shod,
To slay the Nations?

No problem of our time alone,
My gentle brother.
Still grow's the cannon's monotone.
We hope, while fighting hand to hand.
And we must die to understand
Our Spartan mother.

THE THREE MORE WISE MEN

THREE Sages came from the land of Ur
With a tinkling, sleepy caravan,
Bringing jars of frankincense, nard and myrrh
To honour the infant Son of Man,
For the Star hung low like a heavenly gem
O'er the drowsy stable of Bethlehem.

And the blundering years are fled away,
A score of centuries, dark and grim.
But three more Sages marched in today
With their saddles worn, but their horses
trim.

The dew of a world in grief distils
On the sentries pacing the sacred hills.

And one of the Three is good St. George,
A cavalryman of ancient time,
Still hunting dragons through vale and gorge,
In the memory of the Bow Bells' chime.
And though he march with a mountain-gun
He wears the Cross of the Virgin's Son.

102 The Three More Wise Men

And here St. Andrew, a sailorman,
Beholds the village he used to know
Before he came to his Highland clan
And saw the heather's unending glow.
And his white cross ruffles it in the breeze
Which laughs in the dim, old olive trees.

And the third Wise Man from the shining
West

Is bold Saint Patrick, a chaplain still,
With the song of the ages in his heart
As he looks for the Star across the hill.
Now, under his ancient Cross of white,
He hears the music and sees the light.

And the three Wise Men from the West have
brought

Their gifts of liberty, love and truth
To the ancient land where the world was
taught

The unknown arts of brotherly ruth.
Long, long the march, but the Land is won
By the three good Knights of the Virgin's Son.

A BALLADE OF CLOWNING

ALTERNATE victories and defeats,
The face of earth forever marred,
The widows in a thousand streets,
And twenty million men on guard.
The reek of gas, the jagged shard,
The narrow trench, the wicked wire!—
Compassion for a Motley Bard
A-clowning with the world on fire.

Now Liberty her life entreats.
She fears the wolf, the ravening pard.
What crumpled shapes the morning greets,
There in the meadow, daisy-starred!
They died. Their glorious limbs were
scarred
By bloody Force, obscene Desire.—
Compassion for a Motley Bard
A-clowning with the world on fire.

Where are our lives entrancing sweets,
Love's odorous frankincense and nard?
Red wrath and all unwholesome heats
Dwell in our spirits, evil-starred.

104 A Ballade of Clowning

A thousand die to gain a yard,
And hawks destroy our babes, for hire!—
Compassion for a Motley Bard
A-clowning with the world on fire!

L'ENVOI

Prince, ever you inspect the Guard
Paraded at your high desire,
Be gracious to a Motley Bard
A-clowning with the world on fire.

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